

CORRESPONDENCE

CIVIL BEAT

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Chief Judge Susan Oki Mollway
US District Court, District of Hawaii
300 Ala Moana Blvd C-338
Honolulu, HI 96850

Dear Judge Mollway,

Thank you for permitting a Civil Beat reporter to live blog from the trial of the Sou brothers, CR 09-00345SOM.

I thought you might be interested in a brief report on the experience from our perspective. To fulfill our pool reporter role, Civil Beat provided email updates from the courtroom to all news organizations that asked to receive them. These were sent prior to any update being published on our website. It's possible other news organizations took our reporting directly from our website.

Among the news organizations that received our emails were the Associated Press, Honolulu Star-Advertiser, Hawaii Public Radio, KITV, Hawaii Reporter and HawaiiPoliticalInfo.org.

Here's an Aug. 3 example of how our pool reports were used to supplement the reporting of the Associated Press: "Under questioning by Thomas Bienert, an attorney for Alec Sou, Chowsanitphon said the workers were free to leave the farm, they weren't threatened and they had their passports, *according to pool reports provided by Civil Beat.* (emphasis added)"

We did not receive any negative feedback about Sara Lin's presence in the courtroom. We did hear a lot of positive feedback about the reporting, including from one reader, Larry Cundiff, who said that although he wanted to attend the trial every day, he couldn't physically. He thanked us for the live reports, and said they helped him follow the trial and feel like he was in the courtroom.

From our standpoint, the experiment was a success. I respectfully request that in the future you and other federal judges in Hawaii allow reporters to work with laptops and a mobile Internet connection from courtrooms. (I will submit by separate letter a request to do the same thing for the Global Horizons case next year.)

Thank you again for your willingness to experiment with using modern technology to make the courts more public. I would be happy to discuss these issues in person.

Sincerely,

John Temple
Editor and General Manager